

Reconsideration of Decision Regarding Free Telephone

179. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT:
PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:
SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of government has been drawn to news item captioned "Muft Phone Ka Vit Mantri Ne Virodh Kiya, Sanchar Ayog Ne Manzoori Di" published in the Nav Bharat Times dated the 8th June, 2000;

(b) whether free telephones to employees in Telecom Department and Telecom Services Department have been sanctioned;

(c) the loss of revenue;

(d) whether the Cabinet would reconsider and withdraw such facilities limited to a particular class of particular Department; and

(e) if not, the reasons not to give such facilities to all Central Government employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Sir, Government is aware of the various news items appearing in the newspapers against the decision of department to provide the concessional telephone facility to the serving employees of DoT.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Estimated recurring loss of revenue will be between Rs. 78.30 crore (for Low Calling) to Rs. 99.90 crore (for High Calling) per annum. Most of them are likely to fall under low calling subscriber category. As such, the implications are likely to be to the extent of Rs. 78.30 crore. In addition to this, non-recurring loss would be Rs. 24 Crore on account of installation charges.

(d) and (e) There is no proposal to refer the matter to the Cabinet. The decision has been taken by the Telecom Commission. Which is competent for this purpose under the executive and financial powers vested in it. This decision has been taken in the wake of increased competitive environment which has emerged in the telecom sector. The decision is meant to motivate its employees and increase their availability. It is thus an operational decision taken by the Telecom Commission and therefore it does not impact other Departments.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

However, formal orders for implementation of this scheme have not been issued so far in view of the interim stay given by Kerala High Court.

**Free Telephones Connections to the Employees of Telecom
Department**

180. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:
SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have finally decided to give free telephone connection to all the employees in the Telecommunications Department all over the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the guidelines framed for this propose, estimated number of connections falling under this category and estimated cost to be incurred by the Government on this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Sir, Government has decided to extend certain concessions to the serving employees of DoT/DTS in obtaining a private telephone by them. No order has been issued so far as an interim stay has been granted by the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala.

(b) It is proposed to exempt the serving employees from payment of registration charges, installation charges and bi-monthly rental. The employees will be required to pay applicable call charges on the calls made by them over and above, the free calls permissible to any normal telephone subscriber. About three lakh employees are entitled to receive the proposed concessions. Estimated financial implications involved are as under:

i. Non-Recurring: Rs. 24.0 crore

ii. Recurring: Between Rs. 78.3 crore (for Low Calling) to Rs. 99.9 crore (for High Calling) per anum. Most of the employees are likely to fall under low calling subscriber category. As such, the implications are likely to be to the extent of Rs. 78.3 crore.